

Kessler, Frances “Fran” Elizabeth, born December 23, 1960, died peacefully after a brief illness on November 26, 2007, at the age of 46. Widow of Thomas Rowley, her beloved husband. In addition to her mother Elizabeth Couslin and her brother Phillip Couslin, she is survived by her extended courthouse family and by her four-legged feline best friends Einstein, Lover Boy, Lilly, and Little Bug.

Ms. Kessler received a B.A. from Morgan State University in 1981, an M.A. from the University of Baltimore in 1983, and a J.D. from the University of Maryland in 1987. In 1987 Ms. Kessler became a member of the Maryland bar. From 1987 to 1988 she served as the first law clerk to the Honorable Catherine C. Blake of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland. Ms. Kessler was then employed as an attorney adviser at the Patuxent Institution and then by the Legal Aid Bureau Prisoner Assistance Project for several years before returning to the federal court in 1996 as a staff attorney. Ms. Kessler became Coordinating Attorney for Court Operations in 2001 before assuming the position of Chief Deputy Clerk for the Northern Division in 2003.

A gifted attorney, Ms. Kessler worked tirelessly for the civil rights of others. At the court, she used her skills and initiative to help introduce electronic case filing for the U.S. District Court, one of the first courts in the country to use the technology. She worked closely with the attorneys on the court’s bar liaison committee and staffed the court’s Rules and Forms Committee, always providing common sense and practical legal advice aimed at helping litigants and the public. Her colleagues, family, and friends will miss her greatly. Her contributions to the federal judiciary and the legal community will not be forgotten, and her wit will serve as comfort to those who loved and respected her.

The viewing is scheduled for Thursday, November 29, 2007 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Gonce Funeral Home.

Gonce Funeral Home  
4001 Ritchie Highway  
Brooklyn, Maryland  
(410) 789-1800

The memorial service will be held at the Gonce Funeral Home on Friday, November 30, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. A reception will be held at 12:30 p.m. at the Federal Courthouse at 101 West Lombard Street, Baltimore, MD, following the service. The reception will be on the second floor lobby area.

Interment will be private. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to:

Salvation Army, Baltimore Area Command  
814 Light Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230

or at their website at [www.tsabaltimore.org](http://www.tsabaltimore.org).